NEW AVENGERS

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DUSTIN WEAVER
+Keith

ALL-NEW MARVEL NOW!

HICKMAN SCHITI MARTIN 021

PREVIOUSLY IN NEW AVENGERS

ANCESTORS, THERE WILL BE ANOTHER INCURSION. THE WORLD THAT WILL CRASH INTO OURS IS DEFENDED BY GOOD--POSSIBLY GREAT--MEN AND WOMEN OF SIGNIFICANT POWER.

I FEAR WE HAVE REACHED THE MOMENT WHERE OUR ONLY RECOURSE MIGHT BE...WELL, A SHAMEFUL, SINFUL HORROR.

MEASURE ALL THINGS AGAINST THE SURVIVAL OF OUR PEOPLE. AND THAT SURVIVAL ABOVE ALL OTHERS.

THESE WORDS ARE HARD TO HEAR, BUT YOU MUST HEAR THEM ALL THE SAME. YOU WILL KILL THEM ALL IF IT MEANS WAKANDA STANDS.

I SAY THE TICKING CLOCK MAKES US LESS WASTEFUL, BLACK SWAN. IT MAKES US ***BOLD***. I'M DYING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A LITTLE AIR REACHES THOSE REGROWING BONES OF ***CORVUS GLAIVE.***

I THINK, FOR A MAN OF ACTION, YOU TALK TOO MUCH, MAXIMUS.

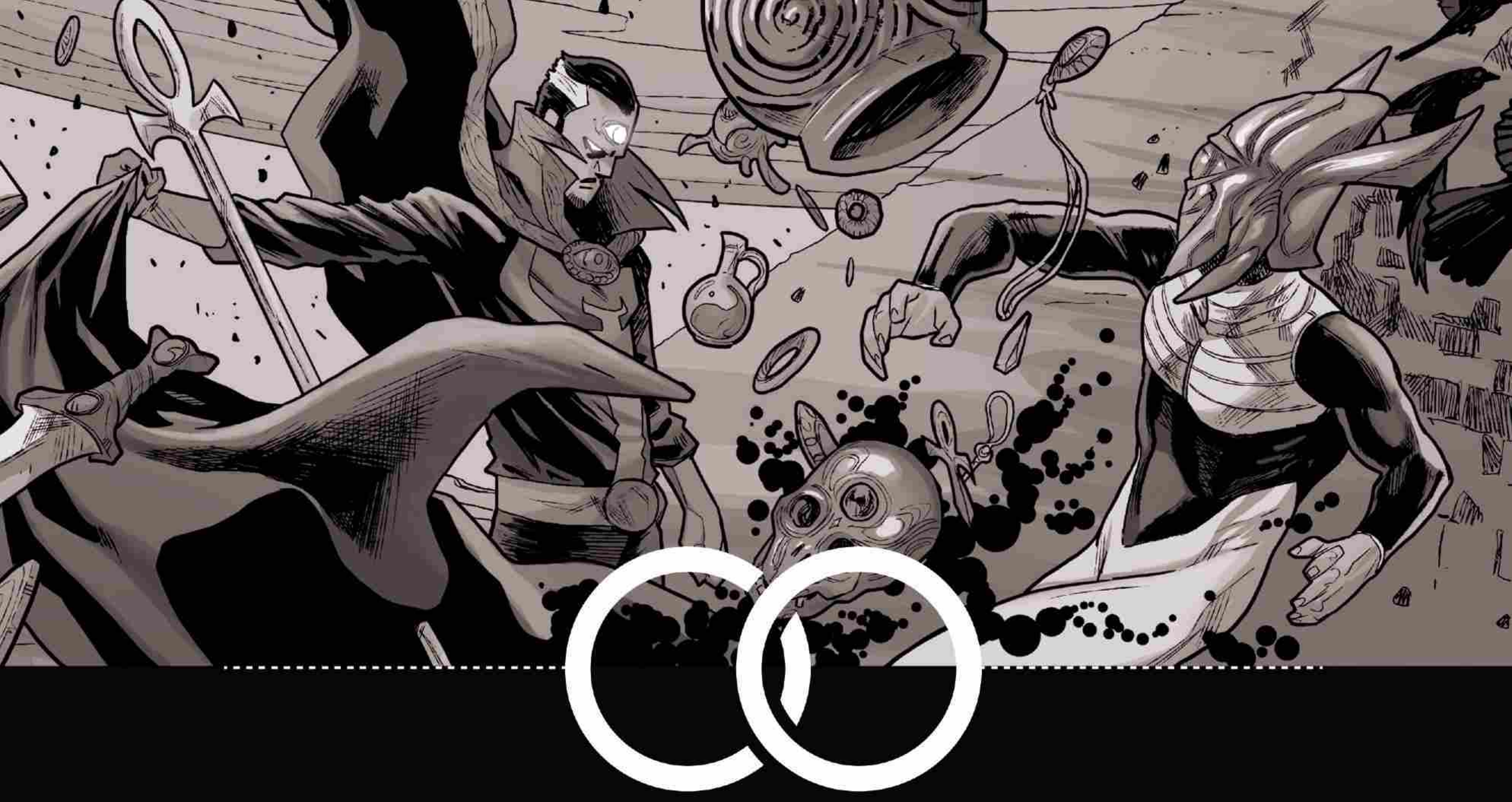
THEY LEFT THE WORLD-DESTROYING WEAPON ON THEIR WORLD. I'LL GO FOR IT...

"...BUT I WON'T BE THE ONLY ONE, I SEE."

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE WHAT REAL POWER COSTS?

I HAVE GIVEN ALL, SACRIFICED WHAT LITTLE REMAINED... ALL TO DESTROY YOUR WORLD...

AND SAVE MINE.



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“THE BOMB”

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THE ILLUMINATI

BLACK BOLT
Celestial Messiah

NAMOR
Imperius Rex

REED RICHARDS
Universal Builder

IRON MAN
Master of Machines

BEAST
Mutant Genius

DOCTOR STRANGE
Sorcerer Supreme

BLACK PANTHER
King of the Dead

HULK
Strongest There Is

BLACK SWAN
Incursion Survivor

MAXIMUS
Inhuman Madman

THE GREAT SOCIETY

BOUNDLESS

DR. SPECTRUM

SUN GOD

THE RIDER

THE JOVIAN

THE NORN

THEN.
THE NECROPOLIS.
WAKANDA.

T'CHALLA...

YES, FATHER?

WHY DOES THE ATLANTEAN STILL BREATHE?

WHY HAVEN'T YOU KILLED HIM YET?

WHY HAVEN'T YOU DONE WHAT YOU PROMISED?

WHAT I *PROMISED?*

I HAVE DONE EVERYTHING THAT COULD BE EXPECTED OF ME--SACRIFICED EVERYTHING FOR MY PEOPLE... EVERYTHING FOR MY NATION.

MY OWN DESIRES, MY OWN MARRIAGE...I HAVE COMMITTED MURDER MANY, MANY TIMES.

I HAVE DONE ALL OF THIS FOR WAKANDA--WITH HEAD HELD HIGH, AND NO REGARD FOR SELF...

HOW ***DARE*** YOU DOUBT ME, FATHER.

MY SON...

HERE IN THE SHADOWLANDS--BEYOND ALL MORTAL CONCERNS AND CONSTRAINTS--I SEE ONLY TWO THINGS: WHAT IS DONE. WHAT IS NOT DONE.

SO AM I BLIND? IS THE ATLANTEAN A WELL-PRESERVED CORPSE YOU USE AS A MARIONETTE? OR DOES HE YET LIVE...ARROGANT AND UNPUNISHED?

BLOOD DEMANDS BLOOD, T'CHALLA--DO YOUR DUTY.

I AM TRYING TO SAVE ***OUR PEOPLE***, FATHER--***THAT IS MY DUTY!***

AND WHILE I STILL LIVE, I WILL NOT LOOK AT THE WORLD AND SEE ALL PEOPLE AS YOU DO--EVENTUAL ASH AND DUST--BUT AS MEN AND WOMEN WHO STILL BREATHE, AND HAVE PURPOSE.

I BELIEVE NAMOR HAS A PURPOSE.

AND UNTIL THAT PURPOSE HAS BEEN FULFILLED... HE WILL HAVE MY MERCY.

MERCY? ***MERCY?***

MY FOOLISH SON. FOR A KING... EVERY MOMENT OF MERCY IS A ***TRAGEDY.***

NOW. INCURSION.
EARTH-616:EARTH-4,290,001.

MY GOD...

I THINK NOT. THIS HAS VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH GOD...OR EVEN GODS.

WE'RE IN A MUCH DARKER PLACE, I'M AFRAID.

I DIDN'T KNOW STRANGE WAS *CAPABLE* OF SOMETHING LIKE THIS...

"OH, STEPHEN... WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME?"

K'OOTH UL D'AYN.

"YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL."

AAARRGGHHHH!

"YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL.

"YOOL D'AYN HAT WHUURL!"

WAYNE!

ACK!

YOU...YOU WERE RIGHT, ZORAN. *I WAS WRONG.*

IF IT ALL ENDS THIS BADLY, I SHOULD HAVE LIVED A BETT--

AARGGHH!

NO... WAYNE... NO...

NOOO!

HURK!

ARRGGHH—

HHHHHHHH

HHHHH

DO WE HAVE ANY IDEA IF WHAT HE IS DOING IS GOING TO SAVE EARTH...

OR ANYTHING AT ALL?

I DON'T KNOW HOW WE COULD. THAT MONSTER IS...

NO.

IT'S NOT THE *MONSTER* THAT SHOULD CONCERN YOU...

IT'S *STEPHEN.*

"WE HAVE TO STOP HIM."

HE'S COMPLETELY LOST CONTROL.

STARK, CAN YOU GET THAT REPULSOR ONLINE? BECAUSE IF I CAN REVERSE THE--

YEAH. A SHORT-FREQUENCY PULSE SHOULD DO IT.

MAYBE.

"WHAT OTHER OPTION DO WE HAVE?"

AAAA.

NONE. OKAY...YOU'RE GOOD TO GO. POWER STEADY?

YEAH.

THEN...

FIRE!

WAKANDA.
THE NECROPOLIS.

"I THINK I'VE FIGURED IT OUT...

"DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR PROBLEM IS?"

WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME?

I SAY PROBLEM LIKE IT'S ONE THING--SINGULAR--BUT IT'S ACTUALLY A COMBINATION OF THINGS. WHICH I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T BOTHER POINTING OUT, AS MOST PROBLEMS ARE ACTUALLY "MULTIPLE PROBLEMS"...

A SERIES OF COMPLICATIONS THAT EVENTUALLY REACH A CRITICAL, NONDISSIPATING STATE THAT INEVITABLY LEADS TO--

IT REALLY IS *STUNNING* HOW MUCH YOU LOVE TO HEAR YOURSELF TALK, MAXIMUS.

YOU WANT ME TO GET TO THE POINT.

I CAN DO THAT.

"YOUR PROBLEM IS ONE OF ***EXCLUSION***, AND IT'S ALSO ONE OF ***EXPERIENCE***...

"SEE, I WENT BACK AND LOOKED AT THE LOGS OF YOUR--AND OTHER SWANS'--ADVENTURES THROUGH SPACE AND TIME, AND SOMETHING JUMPED OUT AT ME...YOU BIRDS HAVE A PATTERN.

"YOU RECRUIT A CERTAIN TYPE OF PERSON TO HELP YOU DO WHATEVER IT IS THAT YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO DO.

"YOU RECRUIT ***HEROES***.

"PROBABLY SOMETHING TO DO WITH EXPLOITABLE IDEALISM AND THE FREQUENTLY TERMINAL AFFLICTION CALLED ALTRUISM.

"BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT YOU DID HERE ON ***OUR*** EARTH...SEE, THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED...BUT YOU GOT MORE THAN YOU BARGAINED FOR.

"YOU'RE USED TO DEALING WITH HEROES...BUT WHAT YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE WITH IS ***KINGS***.

"AND THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM HERE.

"YOU CAN'T THINK OF THEM AS NORMAL MEN. YOU CAN'T EVEN THINK OF THEM AS BEHAVING HUMAN--THAT'S THINKING TOO SMALL...

"THEY ARE LARGER THAN THAT, ***BIGGER*** THAN THAT...THEY EXIST ABOVE OTHER MEN BECAUSE THEY WERE BORN THAT WAY.

"AUTHORITY BEGAN AT THE CRADLE, YOU SEE.

"THEIR VERY IDEA OF MORALITY IS DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU ARE USED TO.

"THE PEOPLE--THEIR PEOPLE--EXPECT THEM TO DO VIOLENCE TO ENSURE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

"AND LIKE GODS, THEY ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO COMMIT MURDER...SO THE PEOPLE CAN SLEEP AT NIGHT KNOWING THEY ARE PROTECTED.

"YOU'VE UNDERESTIMATED YOUR SITUATION, BLACK SWAN.

"YOU'VE UNDERESTIMATED WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH."

BUT THERE IS *SOME* GOOD NEWS.

AND WHAT IS THAT?

I COULD BE A KING.

"WAS IT DAMAGED BY WHATEVER THAT WAS THAT STRANGE CONJURED?"

NO. EVERYTHING LOOKS INTACT, INCLUDING THE SHIELDING MECHANISM.

DIAGNOSTICS ARE GREEN ACROSS THE BOARD...

THE BOMB IS BOTH STABLE AND FULLY OPERATIONAL.

ALL RIGHT THEN. THIS IS IT.

BE-BOOP!

IT DOESN'T HAVE...HAVE TO BE.

YOU... YOU DON'T HAVE TO *DO* THIS...

I WISH THAT WERE TRUE, BUT IT ISN'T, IS IT? IT DOES HAVE TO BE ***ONE WAY*** OR THE ***OTHER***.

I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO BE IGNORANT OF ALL THIS. I WISH I COULD GO BACK...

BUT WE CAN'T... SO HERE WE ARE.

YOU COULD COME WITH US.

I...I WOULD RATHER DIE. WITH...WITH MY FRIENDS...

WITH... WITH MY WORLD.

AND IN THAT, I SUSPECT WE ARE THE SAME.

I'M SORRY. I REALLY AM.

DON'T... DON'T DO IT.

I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN.

EITHER WAY...YOU DESERVED BETTER.

"IT SHOULDN'T END THIS WAY FOR ANY OF US."

EARTH-616.
TEN MINUTES TO COLLISION.

TRIGGER ACTIVE.

ARE WE *REALLY* GOING TO DO THIS?

WE'RE OUT OF TIME, BRUCE... WE'RE OUT OF OPTIONS...WE HAVE TO.

BUT...I...I DON'T THINK I CAN.

I KNOW IT'S A NECESSARY EVIL. I KNOW I WOULD BE SAVING HUNDREDS OF TRILLIONS OF LIVES AT THE COST OF MERE BILLIONS. I KNOW THERE IS NO REAL SHAME IN COMING TO THAT CONCLUSION--IN MAKING THAT CHOICE.

BUT EVEN WITH ALL THINGS HANGING IN THE BALANCE... THERE IS A LINE.

AND I *CAN'T* DO THIS.

WELL, DON'T LOOK AT ME...

I HELPED BUILD THE THING, I'M NOT USING IT EITHER.

BRUCE?

HENRY?

NO.

ABSOLUTELY NOT.

ASK NO QUARTER OF ME, RICHARDS. ASK NOTHING, AS I ALREADY GAVE ALL THAT I HAD.

AND WHAT DID YOU DO WITH MY GIFT? YOU THREW IT AWAY WITH NO ACCOUNTING FOR WHAT I PAID.

DO NOT ASK ME WHAT YOU SHOULD DO WITH YOUR...MACHINE. YOU WOULD NOT LIKE MY ANSWER.

AND YOU, BLACK BOLT? WOULD YO--

GIVE THE TRIGGER TO ME, REED.

I WILL DO IT.

T'CHALLA, I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO--

WE'RE OUT OF TIME. AND THIS IS ALL THAT'S LEFT...

THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO SAY.

THEN WHY HESITATE...IS THIS YET MORE OF YOUR MERCY, T'CHALLA?

WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, YOU TOLD ME TO ALWAYS CONSIDER MY ACTIONS, FATHER.

THIS... DEMANDS CONSIDERATION.

DOES IT?

THIS ACTION IS NOT ABOUT YOU, OR ME, OR EVEN OUR PEOPLE--WHO ALL BLACK PANTHERS HAVE SWORN TO PROTECT...

IT IS THE ENTIRE LINE. ALL THAT WE WILL BE!

THERE *MUST* BE A FUTURE FOR WAKANDA-- AS IT REPRESENTS THE FUTURE OF ALL HUMANITY. THE GOLDEN CITY IS SET ABOVE ALL OTHERS... NOT THROUGH HUBRIS, BUT NECESSITY. A SIGNPOST POINTING THE WAY TO THE FUTURE... AND IT MUST SURVIVE.

DO YOUR DUTY AS A BLACK PANTHER...

AND REWARD OUR FAITH IN YOU, MY SON.

YES...OF COURSE.

YES.

THEN DO IT, BOY. YOU'RE RUNNING OUT OF TIME.

DO IT!

I KNOW I SHOULD...

I KNOW I MUST...BUT THE HORROR OF IT--THE INHUMANITY. MURDERING ALL THOSE PEOPLE. KILLING A WORLD.

IT'S...IT'S WRONG.

OF COURSE IT'S WRONG...

BUT YOU DO IT ANYWAY-- DUTY COMES WITH THE CROWN.

SHOULDN'T SUCH DUTY BE BENEATH US?

THE VERY NATURE OF IT... THE IGNOBILITY OF IT.

NOBILITY?

NONE OF THIS IS *NOBLE*... IT IS *WHAT'S EXPECTED.*

DO IT. NOW.

I CAN'T.

I WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING... FOR YOU, FATHER...FOR MY PEOPLE. BUT I CAN'T DO THIS.

WE WERE CURSED WHEN WE MADE THIS MACHINE...

WE WERE DAMNED THE VERY DAY WE THOUGHT IT WAS FOR MEN TO DECIDE THINGS SUCH AS THIS.

DAMNED, T'CHALLA?

PERHAPS THAT WOULD BE FITTING...

BUT YOU STILL HAVE TIME.

IT...IS WRONG...

AND I CANNOT DO IT, FATHER!

I CANNOT.

NO. YOU CHOOSE NOT TO-- IT IS ***YOUR CHOICE.***

SO HERE IS MINE: THERE IS AN ETERNITY... AND IN IT, YOU ARE DEAD TO ME, AND TO US ALL.

YOU HAVE NO PEOPLE.

YOU ARE NO BLACK PANTHER.

YOU ARE NO LONGER MY SON.

I'M SORRY...I'M SORRY...

IT'S OKAY, T'CHALLA.

IT'S OKAY. I UNDERSTAND...

REED, I... I TRIED, BUT I...

COULDN'T DO IT, JUST LIKE ALL THE REST OF US. MAYBE THAT'S THE WAY TO SEE THIS...

WHEN WE GOT TO THE END OURSELVES, WE FOUND OUT THAT THERE WERE THINGS WE WOULD NOT DO...

AND YOU KNOW...I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THAT. YOU SHOULDN'T BE EITHER...

IT MATTERS.

"IT MATTERS."

THE WAY YOU PEOPLE TALK ABOUT YOUR LIVES-- LIKE THEY MEAN SOMETHING...

"IT MATTERS."

I AM THE GREATEST MAN I KNOW...BUT COMPARED TO THIS, I'M NOTHING.

JUST AS *YOU*...ARE NOTHING.

AM I THE ONLY MAN HERE WITH THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS...OR AM I THE ONLY ONE WITH CONVICTION AT ALL?

NAMOR... DON'T...

IT'S NOT WORTH IT.

THESE LINES YOU WON'T CROSS... THESE THINGS YOU WON'T DO...

THEY *SHAME* YOU.

HOW DARE ANY OF YOU PUT YOURSELF--YOUR DAMNED MORALS--ABOVE THE LIVES OF EVERY LIVING THING?

THE TRUTH IS, YOU PEOPLE AREN'T WORTH THAT...AND NEITHER AM I. OUR LIVES ARE A PITTANCE.

A PETTY, SMALL NOTHING...

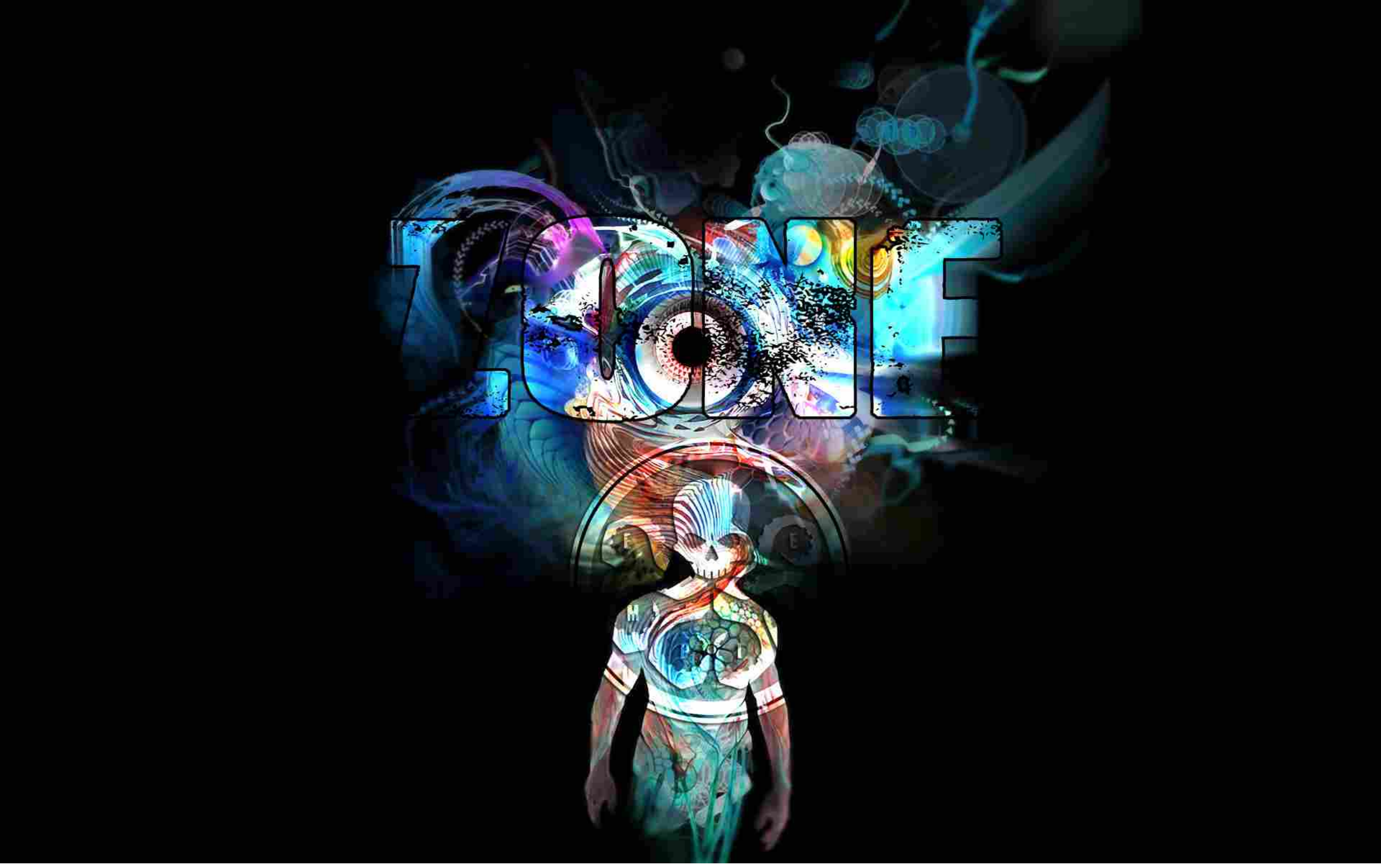
NAMOR!

NOOOO!

OF COURSE *THIS* IS WORTH IT.

NOW WATCH...AS I DO WHAT YOU COULD NOT.

NEW AVENGERS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